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## Phenomenology of mothers' experiences in living with children with AD/HD disorder

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### Abstract

This study evaluates mothers' experiences in living with children with ADHD. This is a qualitative study with a phenomenological approach. Through a convenient sampling, a purposeful sample was selected from Shams Family Counseling Center in Tabriz. The sample consisted of 10 mothers that were interviewed in-depth interviews. Answers were recorded, coded, and organized. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews and analyzed using the seven-step method defined by Colaizzi method. Findings were summarized in four core concepts (named: "family disorderliness", "social worries", "educational worries", and "mother's

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### Introduction

ADHD is one of the most prevalent problems among children and is one of the reasons why people refer to a psychologist or a psychiatrist. There is no doubt that this disorder which affects children and their family's way of life, has some improper upheaval signs such as hyperactive disorder, attention deficit (Biederman & Farunie, 2005). The systematic theories about ADHD indissolubility, focus on the rule of households as a system or widespread social context. Lange & et al (Cited in Heidari, 2011) believe that the family problems, lots of stress, and no /low support and parent's mental pathology such as depression, aggression, overuse of alcohol, matrimony conflict has a close relation with ADHD. Studies reveal that the kind of relation between parents and children with ADHD is the most important and the most fundamental part. Before now researches focused on getting along with each other taking aside in how parents affect their children with ADHD. But now these studies are going to investigate the effects of parents in the same situation. Some of psychologist believes that the relationship between parents and children is effective. The study of this relationship shows us pressure, failure, depression, constraint, and some other kind of despondences (Barkeli & et all, 2001). The mother who has an ADHD child has low self confidence and she also feels more and more guilty (Heidari, 2011). These days lots of problems in our society caused by this relationship between the members of households (Shokohi yekta, 2009). Parvizi, Seid Fatemi & Kiani(2010) conclude that the family has its own rule in the mother's mental health, making them feel at ease and the importance of this force us to do more research on them. Kinds of researches show that ADHD can result in mothers' depression, anxiety, feeling of restriction of parents' part, feeling of not being good at growing children, low emotional dependence, between child and parents, negative relationship between this ADHD child and is/her/ sibling, increasing the pressure in the family, possibility of high divorce (Sheeber, Johnson, 199, Johnston, 1996, cited in Hoshwar, Behnia, Khoshabi, Mirzaie & Rahgozar, 2010). Davidz & Gasper( 2005) suggest that in their relationship or in the family, these children behave weak enough; actually their conduct is not in a good manner. Their family should be aware of their circumstances

and of the decision that they have to make because these have a certain disposition toward the whole family (Kandel, 2007). These children cause their mothers to get angry easily because mothers deal with them in a harsh and unsuccessful way. Apparently studies in mothers' experience is very bounded and up to now such a research is not done in Iran. In this way our research aim to help mothers to get the situation better than before and we want to support mothers in such conditions and improve the quality of their life.

## Method

This research has been done using qualitative method of phenomenology. First, participants are selected with regard to the goals of the research i.e. the description and careful understanding of experiences that mothers with an ADHD child are getting along with. So among mothers that come to Consulting Center of Shams e Tabriz Hospital to take some service, we select some of them who give us the richest and the most descriptive data in to get to the objectives of the study. They come from different classes and absolutely have an ADHD child. Findings in this research are gathered in a phenomenological way (Brithen, 1995). In order to have accurate data we use the opinions of the colleagues. In each interview with mothers, conversations are recorded and the researchers listened to the tapes more than one time in order to have solid and clear information then the information are written and coded and put in the orders. In this study researchers tried to concern about four procedures of valid data analyze them in the levels of certifiably plausibility and conductibility. researchers tried to gather the findings in a careful way without any biased. Finally assembling and analyzing data has done in Colaizzi seven level (Satarzade, Zamanzade& Zenozi, 2008).

## Findings

During this research we found four core concepts and several sub concepts (summary):

CORE CONCEPT 1: Worrying about following treatment which the ADHD child has by the other child in the family.

SUB CONCEPT 1: Lack of discipline, wrangle, destructive of the ADHD child: ADHD goes with kinds of inter individual problems such as inexperienced inter-personal, overdoing ,actions. Having such problems was reported by the most of the mothers that participate in research. \_ She cant do her share at home. He looses his stuff and it really bothers me(Mother 1). \_ He is very naughty .doesn't pay attention to the rules at home .our home is always messy.

SUB CONCEPT 2: Worry about being followed this ADHD child by other children in the family; Children learn in several ways and one of them is watching and mimic the others especially their sibling or friends. So it is acceptable that parents concern about this as follows: \_ I'm worried about my younger daughter. She does as the way the ADHD child does (Mother 5) \_ When she shows up some uncongenial behavior I'm afraid about the other one (Mother 6).

SUB CONCEPT 3: Conflict with spouse; in some case it is thought as the mother's fault. \_ My husband blames me and he thinks it's my fault .We often dispute over that (Mother 8). \_ My husband says that "You have your own problem not our child and this becomes a reason to have a fight ( Mother 9).

SUB CONCEPT 4: Fighting between mother and child; Because of attention deficit, lack of responsibility, lack of mastery connection, The ADHD child cannot pay attention to his mother. \_ When I ask him s.th. He never does it unless we're getting angry with him (Mother 5). \_ He doesn't listen to me .he doesn't wait and I have to punish him so I slapped him (Mother 2).

SUB CONCEPT 5: Financial trouble as the result of the cost of treatment; the period of the treatment is long and the family would tolerate the finance presser. \_ It has been years that I spent for my child but I don't think he is better (Mother 7). \_ The cost of service is too high. I wish they would accept the assurance paper(Mother 4).

CORE CONCEPT 2: The social anxiety for having an ADHD child:

SUB CONCEPT 1: Worry about not succeeding at social jobs: Low social skills and low level of the ADHD children cause not acting good at social situations. \_ I feel that he can't do anything right in the future(Mother 3). \_ It seems he can't do his marriage then (Mother 6).

SUB CONCEPT 2: Ill-treatments and persecuting behaviors of ADHD children cause the restriction in social relations with others. \_ When we go visit grandma he start bothering them (Mother 8). \_ Wherever we go others complaint against him and say:"do something for him"( Mother 7).

SUB CONCEPT 3: Feeling shame and embarrassment at home and at work: Sometimes because of the consequences of the ADHD's behavior among neighborhoods , parents must give indemnity. \_ He fight at his neighbor's friend and their parents grumble about him (Mother 5). \_ I'm always worry about that he hurt somebody in our center (Mother 8).

CORE CONCEPT 3: Worry about academic affaires

SUB CONCEPT 1: Week academic operation: having ADHD problems ,The ADHD children are week academic operators and can't conduct well with their classmates and teachers. \_ He always gets a low grade and often quarrels over with the teacher. They don't content with him at school. I often fight over him too (Mother 4). \_ His average is 12. He isn't inclined to school. He is an absent-minded (Mother 2).

SUB CONCEPT 2: Answering school: The ADHD children has a low level of attention and don't participate in. They learn slowly ,also their academic operation is not acceptable. In this situation parents get some more presser and anxiety. \_ Often I've been called on to school, talking unremittingly about his problem (Mother 1). \_ His teacher often tell him that "what is your parents doing with you. You should take some medicine (Mother 9).

CORE CONCEPT 4: EXPERIENCED NEGATIVE SENSE BY MOTHERS

SUB CONCEPT 1: Anger and rage: Because they don't pay attention to the rules and orders and lack of responsibility, Their mothers faces this situations with anger. \_ When I charge him doing something, He doesn't do it .He does the opposite (Mother 8). \_ Sometimes he makes me mad as much as I hit him (Mother 5).

SUB CONCEPT 2: FEELING GUILTY AND CULPABLE: Once in while mothers feel that is their fault. They have been condemned by their husband and their acquaintances. \_ I think it is my fault. Maybe I was under a lot of pressure when I was pregnant(Mother 3). \_ When I hit him, I feel sorry and guilty for more than 24 hours(Mother 9).

SUB CONCEPT 3: Disappointing about his future and his treatment period: The truth is that is a chronic problem and in some case there is no full treatment up to now ,this truth make parents feel disappointing . \_ He 's been like that for years .I don't think he'll be better (Mother 1).

SUB CONCEPT 4: Feel depression: Mothers with an ADHD child experienced some dejection sense because of their child's disorder, lack of responsibility, deficit attention with the rules and ill-treatment. \_ I feel sad .sometimes I cry (Mother 2). \_ My hands are shaking .Once in while I take sedative pills (Mother 5).

SUB CONCEPT 5: Conflict and dubiety: The ADHD child's parents experience conflict of vindications and chastisement, conflict of drags' side effect, conflict of stability of disorder and dubiety about child incompatibility and peripheral consequences. \_ I doubt that he'll be better .I'm ready to do everything for him as much as I can (Mother 9). \_ We have to tolerate it what should we do? Perhaps this is our destiny (Mother 10).

SUB CONCEPT 6: Anxiety and decrease in self-confidence: the behavior of an ADHD child make mothers so nerves beside family restriction in social intercourse with other families make parents have their self-confidence reduced. \_ Often I 'm nerves. He hurts someone in school or not (Mother 1). \_ I can't sleep well at night. My heart is pulse .I hasn't been like that before (Mother 3).

SUB CONCEPT 7: Feel helplessness and being alone: Mothers are trying and trying but the ADHD child isn't take it fast and he needs time, on the other hand fathers abandons and doesn't want to joining along with mother brought to mothers fell alone . \_ My husband doesn't give his time to the problem. He goes to work early in the morning and comes back home late at night. This is my thing (Mother 4). \_ I can't do it .I'm doing it by myself without any help (Mother 7).

## Discussion

The result of this study reveals that the ADHD mothers have an experience which means the family is fighting and arguing with each other most of the time and it comes from the ill-treatment of ADHD child. Hardness and confusion when they start a relationship and inter-individual inexperienced action is the absolute characteristic of these children it aggravates tension and inter-individual confusion in the family too. Most of mothers believe that above mentioned statement too. And declare that incompatibility and misbehavior of the ADHD's is the factor for family disorder. The behavior of these children has an harmful effect on their family .They also reject from their coetaneous groups because of their quarrelsome mood. Marmorestin (2006) says "exocrine disorders cause confliction with the others and their expectations and when they become disappointed on ADHD's. mothers are the one who responsible for the child's problems .But it is not fair because in a situation which mothers really concern about their child, husbands accused them instead of supporting them as they looking forward to. This findings is parallel with the result of Fisher, Barely, Flincher and Smallish 's research and approve them(1990). Other studies confirm that accompanying with mothers by their husbands is essential. In the other hand findings of these research is about tension and relative conflict between mothers and the ADHD child. Based on this fact it seems that the ill treatment of child for example no attention to the rules and don't give time being disciplined and neat ruin the relationships between mother and child .In such a situation most of mothers hit their child and often talk to them in aggression. Karr(1999) and (Kaplan(1998) showed in their research that the way children with ADHD grow up isn't the first factor being an ADHD child ,but if an ADHD child grows in a convulsive family ,the child disorder will be aggravate. Research on ADHD's shows us that the ADHD'S parents in Iran use the despotical procedures in growing their child up more than parents of normal children. Parents gain a less improvements and pay lots of money without using insurance. On the other hand mothers worry about their child's future of participating in social activities because of their treatment. most of children with this disorder has rejected from their relatives .They are isolated .So they don't take skills which they need to start over a friendship or a social relationship. All of the mothers who are in our research worry about the academic matters, no attention to the teachers, not doing his homework , distraction, amnesia, aggression . Kenner and jet believe that the ADHD's child isn't good enough at school they need some special educations programs (cited in Burt & et. All, 2003). Study on disorder 's consequences such as deficit attention , hyperactive disorder, distraction, obsession and dispute between parents and child intensify the polyhedron disorder as a first talent of the child , and research shows that the ADHD problem occurs in boys more than girls (Dapal, Chitendra, Triskoo, 2006) Graetz, SAVEIR, Hizel, Arnie & Baghorest (2001). The effect of ADHD on families who has such problem is so clear.

## RESULT

We understand that mothers with an ADHD child tolerate pressure and kinds of mental, social and academic concerns. Parents have no information and scientific knowledge on some of these concerns and the problem as a whole. Based on this research and awareness of importance mother's mental health, concerning about their needs and problems, encourage husbands to joint problem and try to understand more about mother's world with an ADHD child. Also providing support resources and therapy strategies for mother's mental health should be the next step to help mare.

## PRAISE AND HONOUR

We appreciate you that help us do this research .We hope that such a research would be a way to solve their problem.

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